



ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-160 – 700 Main Street – Little Rock, AR 72203

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING 2006–2007 RENEWAL APPLICATION

Issue Date:
April 11, 2006

This program is funded through the Arkansas Department of Education and administered by the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE).

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

Through the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) encourages the development of early childhood education programs to help educationally deprived children develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally in order to be prepared for kindergarten. This program is funded under Acts 212 of 1991, 1132 of 1997, 49 of 2004 and 2131 of 2005.

How are ABC programs funded?

Approval of an ABC grant is contingent upon legislative appropriation, State Board of Education approval and the availability of funds. **The issuance of this application does not imply an availability of funds.** If funds are available, the maximum funding per child per year will be as follows:

- \$4,400 for a center-based or licensed child care family home classroom
- \$1,557 for home-visiting (HIPPIY or PAT) programs

An ABC budget should include the core quality elements listed in the budget instruction section. Funds provided shall be used exclusively for the ABC program outlined in this proposal. Upon approval, quarterly payments will be made to a program based on actual enrollment. Programs with at least 80% enrollment will receive the maximum quarterly payment. Otherwise, payments will be reduced on a per child basis.

What must an agency do to be eligible to apply?

Any early childhood agency within the boundaries of Arkansas meeting the criteria below is eligible to apply for renewal of current funding:

- Licensed as a Child Care Center or Child Care Family Home with no formal corrective action and no history of founded licensing/maltreatment complaints which pose an immediate risk to children within the previous 12 months before application.
- No outstanding debt to DCCECE due to overpayment or erroneous billing.
- Obtained/is eligible to obtain State Quality Approval accreditation in all space used for ABC.
- Can provide matching funds in accordance to the local-to-state ratio of 40:60.

Licensing records will be verified. Applicants may plan collaborative programs with other early childhood agencies. One agency will be designated as grantee with the responsibility of program administration.

What are the requirements for a child to be eligible for the program?

There are two categories of eligibility under which a child may qualify: (1) Arkansas Better Chance and (2) Arkansas Better Chance for School Success. Other than eligibility, all other requirements in this application apply equally to Arkansas Better Chance and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success. **All new agencies approved for this program beginning in 2004-2005 are funded under the eligibility guidelines of Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (income eligibility only).**

The Arkansas Better Chance for School Success component serves children that meet all of the following:

1. The child is 3 or 4 years of age by September 15, 2006.
2. Family income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
3. The child resides within the boundaries of an Arkansas school district and an ABC program has space for the child to attend.

Once programs have identified and recruited families in this income group, programs may opt to recruit families between 200-250% of Federal Poverty Level and have parents pay a portion of the ABC reimbursement using a sliding fee scale. Parent contributions will be deducted from program payments.

If your program was operating with ABC funds PRIOR to the 2004-2005 year, you may have funds which can be used to serve children under the original Arkansas Better Chance guidelines. The original ABC program serves children from birth through age 5 that have at least one of the following characteristics:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Family income \leq 200% of Federal Poverty Level | 6. Income eligible for Title I programs. |
| 2. At least one parent without high school diploma or GED. | 7. Eligible under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| 3. Low birth weight (<5 pounds, 9 ounces). | 8. Child/family history of abuse or neglect |
| 4. At least 1 parent < 18 years of age when child was born. | 9. A developmental delay identified through screening |
| 5. Family history of substance abuse/addiction. | 10. Limited English Proficiency. |

For what period of time is the grant?

Upon approval, the grant award period is July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. Grants must be renewed annually. Applicants must reapply every year.

What do I do if I have questions?

All questions and requests for clarification should be addressed in writing c/o the Issuing Officer Paul Lazenby and e-mailed no later than April 21, 2006 to pwlaizenby@arkansas.gov. Responses will be posted on the ABC website: www.arkansas.gov/childcare/abcpro.html.

What is the deadline for this application?

PLEASE NOTE THIS IMPORTANT CHANGE FOR THIS YEAR. Agencies must **E-MAIL** all four parts of the application to the DCCECE Issuing Officer at pwlaizenby@arkansas.gov no later than **4:00 p.m. on FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2006.**

See below for a summary of all due dates related to this application.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	
EVENT	DATE
RFA issued	April 11, 2006
Due date for written questions	April 21, 2006
Responses posted on website	May 5, 2006
Closing date and time for receipt of application	MAY 12, 2006 at 4:00 P.M.
Notification to programs recommended for renewal	May 30, 2006
Contract start date (Subject to approval)	July 1, 2006

APPLICATION SELECTION AND EVALUATION

How are renewal applications evaluated?

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will oversee the process by which programs are renewed for the Arkansas Better Chance grant. Division staff will review all parts of the application, in addition to past performance. These elements of past performance shall be considered equally in the renewal process:

- **Achievement of Quality Approval (QA) status**
Programs are encouraged to seek QA for their entire facility. If QA is sought, the Division will review records to verify accreditation.
- **Scores of Program Evaluations utilizing the Environmental Rating Scale**
Programs must score a minimum of 5.5 (with no subscore < 4.5) at each site by the third site visit completed. Sites not meeting this condition will not be funded for the following year.
- **Staff Qualifications**
Retention of qualified staff is a key component of participation in the Arkansas Better Chance program. Reviewers shall evaluate staff turnover rates to determine how well program retains staff.
- **Educational Progress of All Staff Working Via A Staff Qualification Plan (DRP)**
ABC staff working in a program utilizing a Staff Qualification Plan (DRP) must be making satisfactory progress towards completion. Unsatisfactory progress may be defined as low grades (GPA < 2.00), dropped classes or dis-enrolling from an education program.
- **Financial Responsibility and Accountability**
This item shall be evidenced by timely submission of accurate and complete financial data which conforms to the ABC guidelines for budgets.
- **Satisfactory Program Monitoring Visits**
Programs must have a history of satisfactory monitoring visits, which is interpreted to mean “in compliance with all elements of a field audit.” Any program not in compliance on any issue must be meeting the requirements of a Program Improvement Plan.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMS

1. There are four parts to this application, each in a different file: Part A (Basic Information); Part B (Program Design); Part C (Budget) and Part D (Budget Justification). Each part of this application can be completed on your computer by filling in the requested fields. Because all parts of the applications must be submitted by e-mail, **HANDWRITTEN APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.**
2. All four parts of the application must be completed and submitted before your request for grant renewal may be considered.
3. **Note this change:** You must **e-mail** your completed application. No signatures are required on the application. A signature will be required on a grant agreement before funds are disbursed.
4. Text should only appear on one side of the paper. No two-sided copies.
5. Due to variations in programming and funding, you must complete **SEPARATE** applications if you are applying for both center/family home-based and HIPPY/PAT slots.

BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Using the guidelines below, prepare an ABC program budget using the forms in Parts C and D of the application. You should include the details of your match, which must contain a minimum of 40% of ALL costs associated with the program. Budgets shall demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the program and the use of federal, state, local, and/or private funds in conjunction with the ABC monies. The following are general guidelines to follow in preparing your ABC program budget.

- Budget amounts should correlate to the amounts listed in the Core Quality Models.
- Match sources must be detailed (Listing “CASH” or “IN KIND” is not sufficient).
- A justification must be provided for each line item for which ABC funds are requested. Use the justification worksheet immediately following this section.
- Programs must budget the minimum set by the core model, in either ABC funds or match, in the following categories: professional development, curriculum, parent involvement, and screenings.

SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS

- Salaries paid from ABC funds may include the lead teacher, classroom teacher, paraprofessional and program coordinator. Home-visiting programs may pay a coordinator and home educator.
- Salaries and benefits should be paid commensurately with ABC staff education and experience. DCC-ECE has established an annual salary matrix for lead teacher, classroom teacher and paraprofessional which shall serve as salary recommendations for ABC. (See attached matrix.)
- The salary range indicated for each position is based on a 9-10 month program year ONLY.
- If any ABC staff are expected to work in another class during the summer months, this must be indicated in the employment contract.
- School district programs may establish a staff salary using a base rate of pay from a school district matrix, then supplement with a stipend for additional duties/work hours. Such duties and hours shall be specifically listed in any contract. The school district’s personnel committee must review and approve any contract containing a stipend for additional ABC duties or hours.
- **Programs paying below the recommended amount may not use match for those salaries.**
- Fringe benefits shall be paid in an amount not less than 25% of the annual salary amount and shall include an offer of comprehensive health insurance for the employee. Employees may be required to contribute a portion of the health insurance premium not to exceed 25% of the premium cost. **Fringe benefits must be paid continually through the summer months.**
- Employees covered under another health insurance plan may decline the offer of insurance in writing. Programs shall not be required to provide compensation in lieu of insurance if declined.

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

- Administrative expenses may include rent, utilities, copying, postage, office supplies and salaries for principals, counselors, janitors, school nurses and secretaries.
- **Total administrative expenses (including administrative salaries) shall not exceed 10% of your total ABC budget (state plus match).** Example—With 20 children, you have an ABC state amount of \$88,000 and match of \$58,667 for a total budget of \$146,667. Total administrative expenses may not exceed \$14,667.

SCREENINGS

- Programs may use a maximum of \$40 per child for developmental screens in either ABC funds or match.
- Programs may count up to \$60 per child in match for health screenings paid by AR Kids or insurance.
- Programs shall pay any required health screening costs for any child not covered by AR Kids or insurance.
- For any child requiring additional therapy (occupational, speech, physical), programs may count a maximum of \$500 per child as match.

NUTRITION

- Programs may use as match up to 100% of the reimbursement amount received for ABC kids through either Department of Education or Child and Adult Care Food Program (\$4.25 per day per child). Programs claiming this amount may not count a cook's salary in the budget.
- For children whose family income falls between 185-250% of Federal Poverty Level, ABC programs must cover the cost of those meals.

CURRICULUM

- Curriculum items may include learning centers, comprehensive and supplementary learning materials, curriculum training costs, supply kits for children and other classroom consumables.
- Items that have been custom made for the ABC program may be counted towards match in an amount not to exceed the cost of materials plus modest labor fees.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Parent involvement includes any activity by which the parent becomes engaged in the ABC child's learning process. This may include on-site functions or at-home activities. Some examples include parent education kits, newsletters, parent dinners, open houses, speakers for parent meetings and field trips.
- Programs may utilize parent involvement funds to pay for translators at parent functions if there are parents present whose primary language is not English.

TECHNOLOGY

- Every classroom shall be equipped with a computer with high-speed internet access. Each home-based educator shall also have such access. This equipment is necessary for the timely completion of enrollment data in COPA and assessment data in Work Sampling.
- Each classroom may purchase a digital camera, video camera or scanner to record classroom activity and artwork, not to exceed \$400 per classroom.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- For any staff working via a Staff Qualification Plan (DRP), programs shall use professional development funds to pay for tuition, books and testing fees for that staff. We encourage programs to use these funds for any staff who wishes to obtain a higher degree in early childhood. This may include graduate work.
- Programs may count the actual cost of attending any trainings or teaching conferences related to early childhood under this category.

TRANSPORTATION

- The cost of transportation for ABC children may be budgeted to the program. This includes van or bus lease plus insurance. Programs may not purchase a vehicle outright using ABC funds.
- The amount of parent transportation may be claimed as match. Programs may count 44.5¢ per mile for each round-trip the parent makes for match up to a maximum of \$4.45 per day per child.
- ABC staff required to travel for their job shall be reimbursed at least 39¢ per mile for mileage.

SUPPORT SERVICES AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- No appliances shall be purchased with ABC funds (washer/dryers, dishwashers, refrigerators and stoves).

CORE QUALITY MODELS AND SALARY RECOMMENDATIONS

#1. Center-based (Based on classroom of 20 children)

Core Quality Component		Center with Director Included	Center without Director Included
Well-Qualified and Compensated Staff	1/4 Time Program Manager	\$ 5,000	n/a
	25% Fringe	\$ 1,250	n/a
	Classroom Teacher	\$ 35,000	\$ 40,000
	25% Fringe	\$ 8,750	\$ 10,000
	Paraprofessional	\$ 16,000	\$ 16,000
	25% Fringe	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Professional Development	\$1,500 per staff	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Child Assessment	\$50 per child	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Screenings	\$50 per child	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Parent Engagement	\$100 per child	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Curriculum/Classroom	\$250 per child	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Administrative Costs	\$200 per child	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Transportation	\$100 per child	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Maximum ABC Funding		\$ 88,000	\$ 88,000
Required 40% Match		\$ 58,667	\$ 58,667
Total Program Cost		\$ 146,667	\$ 146,667
Cost Per Child		\$ 7,333	\$ 7,333

#2. HIPPY & PAT (Based on caseload of 27 children)

Core Quality Component		Amount Budgeted
Well-Qualified and Compensated Staff	1/6 Coordinator Salary	\$ 5,750
	25% Fringe	\$ 1,425
	Home-Based Educator	\$ 16,000
	25% Fringe	\$ 4,000
Professional Development	\$1500 per staff	\$ 1,500
Child Assessment	\$50 per child	\$ 1,350
Screenings	\$50 per child	\$ 1,350
Parent Engagement	\$50 per child	\$ 1,350
Curriculum	\$170 per child	\$ 4,590
Administrative Costs	\$100 per child	\$ 2,700
Staff Travel	\$75 per child	\$ 2,025
Maximum ABC Funding		\$ 42,040
Required 40% Match		\$ 28,027
Total Program Cost		\$ 70,067
Cost Per Child		\$ 2,595

#3. Family Child Care Home (Based on 10 children)

Core Quality Component		Amount Budgeted
Well-Qualified and Compensated Staff	Family Home Teacher	\$ 28,000
	Fringe	\$ 6,000
Professional Development		\$ 3,000
Child Assessment	\$50 per child	\$ 500
Screenings	\$50 per child	\$ 500
Parent Engagement	\$100 per child	\$ 1,000
Curriculum/Classroom	\$250 per child	\$ 2,500
Administrative Costs	\$150 per child	\$ 1,500
Transportation	\$100 per child	\$ 1,000
Maximum ABC Funding		\$ 44,000
Required 40% Match		\$ 29,333
Total Program Cost		\$ 73,333
Cost Per Child		\$ 7,333

RECOMMENDED SALARY MATRIX

CERTIFIED TEACHERS (P-4 or K-6)							
Bachelors Degree ECE				Masters Degree ECE			
0 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	15 years
\$28,000	\$31,000	\$34,000	\$37,000	\$32,500	\$35,000	\$37,500	\$40,000
NON-CERTIFIED CLASSROOM TEACHERS							
Associate Degree ECE		Bachelor Degree ECE				Masters Degree ECE	
0 years	5 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	0 years	5 years
\$24,000	\$26,000	\$26,000	\$28,000	\$30,000	\$32,000	\$30,000	\$32,500
PARAPROFESSIONALS							
CDA			Associate Degree ECE			Bachelor Degree ECE	
0 years	5 years	10 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	0 years	5 years
\$13,000	\$15,000	\$18,000	\$14,500	\$16,500	\$19,000	\$19,000	\$23,000
\$9.1228	\$10.5263	\$12.6316	\$10.1754	\$11.5789	\$13.3333	\$13.3333	\$16.1404